



PLANNING INFORMATION REPORT

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NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

CENTRAL PLANNING BOARD

THE CITY PLANNING JOB IN NEWARK

Whether or not one agrees with Plato that a City is a place where men lead a common life for a noble end or one agrees with Dante's answer to the question: "Where didst thou see Hell? "In the City around me," the development of cities has become one of civilizations great undertakings.

Because most cities don't "just grow" like Topsy, plans for their development have occupied the attention of people concerned with living and working in urban centers.

City planning defined briefly and in its simplest terms means intelligent forethought applied to the development or redevelopment of the community. A plan for a city is a document which attempts to set down in words, maps and charts a guide for public officials and private citizens in the developing or redeveloping and using of land.

Newark first made plans for orderly growth and development in its Master Plan of 1913 and continued again with its post war Master Plan of 1947. During the past few years, as part of the updating process of this Official Master Plan, the Newark Central Planning Board and its staff have been developing a continuing 10-year urban renewal plan that establishes the lines for action in slum clearance, neighborhood renewal and conservation for the decades ahead. This continuing 10-year renewal plan will be published shortly.

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For a city that maintains an adequately financed continuing program of planning, the City or Master Plan can be used in three vital ways:

1 - It can promote the concrete objectives that the community has decided upon as reflecting its highest, most practical aspirations.

2 - It can be an effective means for guiding, controlling and encouraging sound growth and community renewal.

3 - It can be a major tool to coordinate the governmental activities with their complicated interrelationships that go on day by day in the work of planning and building public works, administering and carrying out urban renewal programs, and making and enforcing laws dealing with minimum standards.

Planning obviously covers much ground and involves many people and agencies. The City Plan has two basic features. The first of these is a plan for the pattern of land uses of the entire city area. The second feature is a plan and program for community services to be provided by public and semi-public agencies. The City Plan concerns itself with people, with housing, highways and streets, as well as with schools, parks and playgrounds. How many? Where? In what order? are the most crucial questions that planners ask. The planning function also includes continuous development of a capital budget and program for a six year period so that public needs can be measured, evaluated and given priorities. Projects can be coordinated with the City's ability to pay. When all of these elements, plus zoning and subdivision regulations are drawn

together in one plan or publication, a Master Plan for the entire city or an Urban Renewal Plan for a specific area is the result.

The purposes of planning are to improve the economic base of the community and to enhance the community's liveability. A number of recent typical examples of planning work in Newark includes:

1 - Proposals to ease north-south vehicular movement by realigning and widening McCarter Highway and Mulberry Street.

2 - Recommendations for off-street parking lots in the Roseville, Clinton Hill and Weequahic areas.

3 - Review of all slum clearance and redevelopment proposals submitted by the Newark Housing Authority and Redevelopment Agency.

4 - Planning and directing the renewal and rehabilitation of the Lower Clinton Hill Area.

5 - Preparing Newark's first capital budget and six-year capital improvements program.

6 - Proposing a recreation area near Elm Road in the Ironbound section of the city.

7 - Zoning recommendations to control housing and occupancy changes in the Forrest Hill section and in the Clinton Hill project area.

8 - Participating actively in programs to develop the Meadowlands towards its industrial potential.

9 - Informing the public and interested agencies about the planning, renewal, population, economic and financial state of the City's affairs.

As indicated earlier, it is obvious that other agencies also perform some aspects of city planning. For example, the Department of Public Works, the Newark Commission for Neighborhood Conservation and Rehabilitation, the Department of Health and Welfare, the Newark Housing Authority and the Newark Economic Development Committee all make decisions that affect the City's growth and development. It falls to the Central Planning Board and the Planning Officer to relate these decisions to each other and to the overall needs of the City, its people and its neighborhoods. One of the unique jobs of the Board is to plan for the future of the City by developing and applying desirable standards of residential, commercial and industrial growth and change.

The Central Planning Board is composed of nine members consisting of the Mayor, a member of the Municipal Council, the Director of the Department of Public Works and six citizens of Newark. Its members are appointed by the Mayor for six year overlapping terms and its present chairman is Mr. Raymond P. Stabile. The Board is empowered to make such revisions and changes in the Master Plan as changing circumstances and conditions require. It also functions as the City's zoning commission and, as such, conducts extensive studies of zoning ordinance and of the zoning map of Newark.

The Board's powers are essentially, though not entirely advisory in nature. It reviews and recommends action on proposals from other agencies and also initiates planning actions on its own. Under this arrangement, a normal and essential part of its

operation means working closely with all City agencies.

As coordinator for all the planning work of the City, the Planning Officer, appointed by the Mayor, acts as consultant to the Central Planning Board and to all other City agencies that have a planning role. In this manner, it is possible to achieve an integrated administration of planning work.

"City Planning is concerned with seeing that all of the physical facilities needed by the people are properly arranged in relation to one another, and fulfill their function in the urban economy. The City Plan is essentially a framework within which the City grows and a guide to follow in that growth. The City Plan is dynamic and not a static mold. It must be kept up to date and should be flexible enough to permit variation in detail when necessary. It must be bold and challenging; yet practical enough to remain within the City's financial ability to carry out. Most important of all, it must be a plan of the people and for the people. Otherwise, it is doomed to failure from the beginning."

The main objectives of the Official Master Plan may be summarized as follows:

- 1 - A well balanced, unified development of the entire City.
- 2 - Sound and stable property values in all parts of the City.

- 3 - Protecting of existing area of owner-occupied dwellings.
- 4 - Good environment for rental housing areas.
- 5 - Relief of traffic congestion and establishment of improved terminal facilities for parked automobiles.
- 6 - Good mass transportation facilities.
- 7 - Adequate public recreational areas.
- 8 - Adequate public health facilities.
- 9 - Adequate educational facilities
- 10- Improved facilities for industrial development.
- 11 - Enhancement of the City's appearances.

Good City Planning is not a new concept, for it is not solely concerned with such individual elements as highways, traffic congestion, parks, playgrounds or the promotion of business or industry. Rather, it is vitally concerned with the proper relationships of all of these elements for efficient, productive and stable uses of land which serve the best interests of the whole community. Planning is a process in which all segments of the community should participate.

The older cities, especially those on the Atlantic seaboard, need give particular study to their renewal possibilities. Newark is no exception.

Planning in Newark attempts to improve the physical, economic and social requirements and abilities of the city at large. It is a continuous process of supplying advice to local government and private enterprise on day-to-day actions based upon a long range plan to guide the future of our city.